

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 COA-02 EB-11 COME-00 AGR-20 INT-08 CG-00

L-03 PM-07 NSC-07 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 DODE-00 SCI-06 DLOS-06 DOTE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 AID-20 IGA-02 OMB-01 DRC-01 /149 W

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O R 282234Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0515

INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 QUITO 2102

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS EC

SUBJECT: FISHERIES TALKS: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

REF: QUITO 2028

1. SUMMARY: ABRUPT INTRODUCTION OF "PRECONDITIONS" TO FISHERIES TALKS RAISES QUESTION WHETHER FONOFF'S PONCE ACTUALLY SPEAKING FOR GOE, IN VIEW OF PAST RECORD OF ACCEPTANCE OF US PROPOSAL AT HIGHEST GOE LEVELS, MOVE MAY REPRESENT ALL-CIVILIAN FONOFF'S ATTEMPT TO DEMONSTRATE TO MILITARY, THROUGH TOUGHNESS, ITS RELIABILITY. REFERENCE IN TALKING POINTS TO "ARREGLO INTERINO" MAY HAVE CONJURED UP MEMORIES OF "MODUS VIVENDI" WITH GOE A DECADE AGO, FOR WHICH FONOFF WAS LATER HEAVILY CRITICIZED. NEW CONDITIONS MAY REPRESENT MOVE TO STALL TALKS INDEFINITELY, THUS REMOVING FONOFF FROM LINE OF FIRE. I WILL TEST OUT ABOVE BY DISCUSSION WITH FONMIN, OFFERING TO ALTER DRAFT PRESS RELEASE, OR SCRAP IT ENTIRELY WITH VIEW TO LIMITING PUBLICITY AND FONOFF INVOLVEMENT. MEANWHILE, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD CONTINUE WITH PLANS TO FACILITATE MILITARY PURCHASES, AS THIS IS KEY TO FAVORABLE US-ECUADOREAN POLITICAL CLIMATE.
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DEPARTMENT'S REACTION BY APRIL 3 TO RATIONALE BEHIND FONOFF

CONDITIONS IS REQUESTED. CONTINUING DEPARTMENT CONTACT WITH INDUSTRY IS RECOMMENDED, WITH VIEW TO DEVELOPING USEFUL ASSOCIATION IDEAS AND POSSIBLY OPENING OF INDUSTRY-TO-INDUSTRY TALKS WITHOUT FONOFF. END SUMMARY.

2. AS I WAS PICKING MYSELF UP OFF THE FLOOR AFTER HAVING HAD THE RUG JERKED OUT FROM UNDER ME BY THE FOREIGN OFFICE, I HAD OCCASION TO REMEMBER A COMMENT MADE LAST WEEK IN A TELEGRAM TO THE EFFECT THAT ECUADOREANS ARE NEVER EASY TO DEAL WITH. IT OCCURS TO ME THAT MY PRESCIENCE ON THAT SUBJECT WAS EQUALLED ONLY BY MY LACK OF IT ON THE FISHING TALKS. BE THAT AS IT MAY, THIS TELEGRAM OUTLINES WHERE I THINK WE NOW ARE AND HOW WE SHOULD PROCEED.

3. THE PRINCIPAL QUESTION WHICH ARISES FROM MY MARCH 26 FONOFF CONVERSATION (REFTEL) IS WHETHER PONCE WAS IN FACT SPEAKING FOR THE GOE WHEN HE INTERPOSED BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS ON MIGRATORY SPECIES AS A PRECONDITION TO FISHERIES TALKS. IT IS HARD (BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE IN THE ECUADOREAN CONTEXT) TO BELIEVE THAT PONCE WOULD HAVE RAISED THIS ISSUE WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE AND APPROVAL OF FOREIGN MINISTER LUCIO PAREDES. NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL RECORD OF GOE ACCEPTANCE AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF FISHERIES TALKS AS PROPOSED BY US: BY LUCIO PAREDES HIMSELF (QUITO 842); BY PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ (QUITO 639; 1666); BY THEN ACTING FONMIN VALDEZ (QUITO 1625); AND BY NATURAL RESOURCES MINISTER JARRIN (QUITO 245).

4. WE SPECULATE THAT PONCE MAY HAVE SECURED LUCIO'S GO-AHEAD FOR AN ATTEMPT TO MILK OUR OBVIOUS INTEREST IN FISHERIES TALKS FOR ALL IT IS WORTH. OR THE PHRASE "ARREGLO INTERINO"--INTERIM ARRANGEMENT--MAY WELL IN SPANISH BE CONJURING UP UNPLEASANT MEMORIES OF THE "MODUS VIVENDI" ON FISH WHICH WE NEGOTIATED DURING THE TIME OF THE JUNTA (1963-65). THIS WAS, AS WILL BE RECALLED, ROUNDLY CONDEMNED BY SUCCEEDING GOVERNMENTS, AND THE FON-OFF TOOK A LOT OF FLAK OVER ITS ROLE IN THE AGREEMENT. LUCIO AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAVE ALWAYS STRUCK US AS QUITE SKITTISH OVER THEIR POSITION AS THE ONLY ALL-CIVILIAN MINISTRY IN A MILITARY GOVERNMENT. THEY MAY BE ATTEMPTING

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TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM FUTURE CRITICISM BY A SHOW OF DOCTRINAIRE PATRIOTISM. OR CONCEIVABLY OUR SUGGESTION OF A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT MAY, INSTEAD OF PROVING A PUBLIC SHIELD BEHIND WHICH THE GOE COULD HIDE, HAVE INSTEAD THRUST THE MINISTRY INTO AN UNCOMFORTABLE CENTRAL ROLE IN THE PROPOSED TALKS. THUS, PONCE'S "PRE-CONDITIONS" MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO EVADE THIS ROLE BY STOPPING THE DISCUSSIONS IN THEIR TRACKS. FINALLY, THERE IS ALWAYS

THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEY MAY SIMPLY HAVE DECIDED NOT TO
PROCEED WITH THE TALKS.
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 QUITO 2102

5. WHATEVER THE REASON, I BELIEVE THE NEXT STEP IS TO
TEST THESE SPECULATIONS BY SEEKING A CLARIFICATION AT
HIGHER LEVELS. ACCORDINGLY, I PROPOSE TO ARRANGE AN
APPOINTMENT WITH FONMIN LUCIO PAREDES TO DISCUSS THE
IMPASSE WHICH THESE NEW CONDITIONS HAVE CREATED. SINCE I
AM VISITING PORTOVIEJO, MANTA, GUAYAQUIL AND MACHALA ON
APRIL 2-4, THE EARLIEST I COULD SEE HIM WOULD BE APRIL 5.
DURING THE COURSE OF THIS CONVERSATION, IN ADDITION TO
REVIEWING THE COMMITMENT TO TALKS BY THE GOE, I WOULD
RAISE THE DRAFT PRESS RELEASE AND OFFER TO ALTER ANY
OBSTRUCTIVE LANGUAGE--OR TO SCRAP IT COMPLETELY IF THIS
PROVED MORE CONVENIENT TO THE GOE, AS MAY BE THE CASE.
DEPENDING ON HIS RESPONSE, I WOULD PROPOSE TO
EXPLORE THE MATTER FURTHER WITH PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ IF
THIS SEEMS INDICATED.

6. IN THE INTERIM, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD CONTINUE WITH
PLANS TO FACILITATE MILITARY EQUIPMENT PURCHASES BY THE
GOE AND, SPECIFICALLY, WITH THE VISIT OF ARMY AND AIR

FORCE ADVISORY TEAMS. I ALSO RECOMMEND WE CONTINUE TO SEEK WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE GOE NAVY'S EQUIPMENT NEEDS ALONG THE LINES RECOMMENDED IN QUITO 1798. WE HAVE AN
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IMPORTANT POLITICAL STAKE IN THESE SALES AND, IF WE WERE TO PULL BACK, THE ECUADOREAN MILITARY WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY FILL THEIR REQUIREMENTS ELSEWHERE AND THE SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO SEIZURES OF OUR FISHING VESSELS MIGHT CHANGE. IN ANY CASE, THE PROSPECT (AND FULFILLMENT) OF THESE PURCHASES ARE AN INDISPENSABLE ELEMENT IN CREATING AND FURTHERING THE FRIENDLY CLIMATE NECESSARY FOR PROGRESS IN FISHERIES ISSUES IN PARTICULAR AND BETTERMENT OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS IN GENERAL.

7. FOR MY OWN INFORMATION AND USE IN CASE THE ISSUE IS RAISED AGAIN, I WOULD WELCOME THE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION BY APRIL 3 TO PONCE'S RATIONALE FOR THE NECESSITY OF AN AGREEMENT ON MIGRATORY SPECIES IN ADVANCE OF FISHERIES TALKS. HE SAID, IT WILL BE RECALLED, THAT AN INDUSTRY-TO-INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT MIGHT WELL BE JEOPARDIZED IF THE US VIEW ON MIGRATORY SPECIES WERE TO PREVAIL AT THE LOS CONFERENCE. IN OUR VIEW, THE MULTILATERAL REGULATION OF TUNA CATCH, AS PRACTICED TO DATE THROUGH THE IATTC AND TO WHICH ECUADOR OBJECTS, OFFERS NO APPARENT OBSTACLE TO A BILATERAL ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT AND, INDEED, THE GOE ALREADY HAS SUCH A CHARTER WITH THE US-BASED FIRM B AND B FISHERIES. PONCE WAS NOTABLY VAGUE IN HIS ARGUMENT. I REGARD IT AS A SPURIOUS NON-ISSUE AND, UNLESS INSTRUCTED TO THE CONTRARY, INTEND TO RESPOND ALONG THE FOREGOING LINES IF THE ISSUE ARISES AGAIN. AND, DEPENDING UPON THE TURN OF THE CONVERSATION, I MAY BE SPLENETIC ENOUGH TO INQUIRE WHY THE NEW ECUADOREAN FISHING LAW DISCRIMINATES ONLY AGAINST THE US.

8. IN THE MEANTIME, I WOULD URGE THE DEPARTMENT TO CONTINUE ITS CONTACTS WITH SAN DIEGO, ENCOURAGING THE INDUSTRY TO REMAIN OPEN TO THE ASSOCIATION IDEA AND, HOPEFULLY, COME UP WITH A VARIETY OF ARRANGEMENTS WHICH MIGHT PROVE TEMPTING TO THE GOE. IF RELATIONS WITH THE FONOFF REMAIN AT THE STANDOFF STAGE, WE MAY POSSIBLY WISH AT SOME POINT TO HAVE A SMALL INDUSTRY DELEGATION FLY DOWN HERE WITHOUT FANFARE AND, AFTER SUITABLE INTRODUCTIONS, SIMPLY BEGIN TO DISCUSS ASSOCIATION WITH THE GOE COUNTERPARTS.

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9. ACTION REQUESTED:

A. THAT THE DEPARTMENT INFORM ME OF ITS REACTION TO
PARAGRAPH 7, ABOVE, BY APRIL 3. I WOULD OF COURSE
WELCOME ANY OTHER COMMENTS THE DEPARTMENT MIGHT WISH TO MAKE.

B. THAT THE DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATE WITH INDUSTRY
REPRESENTATIVES ALONG THE LINES OF PARAGRAPH 8, ABOVE.
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